



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8TH APRIL 2020

DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Scrutiny Commission on the Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023, attached as Appendix A to this report. The draft Plan will be presented to the Cabinet alongside any comments of the Commission and thereafter presented to full Council for approval.

Policy Framework and Previous Decision(s)

2. The County Council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annual Youth Justice Plan which is linked to the funding provided to Youth Offending Services nationally by the Youth Justice Board.

Background

3. At the time of inception of Youth Offending Teams nationally in 2002 the Youth Justice Board (YJB) provided the framework for the Youth Justice Plan, along with considerable scrutiny and oversight. Several years ago, Youth Offending Teams were given the freedom and flexibility to produce a Youth Justice Strategic Plan overseen by their Youth Offending Service Management Board (YOSMB) in line with their own timetable and format. The current requirement is that the Plan or annual update should be submitted to the YJB by the end of July 2020.
4. There is an option for YOSMBs to choose between a one or three year plan. Following the transformation of Early Help Services last year, the decision was taken to provide a one year plan to enable appropriate time for the youth and justice delivery to take effect. That work has now been done and it is therefore proposed that the new Plan cover a full three year period.

The Draft New Plan

5. The Youth Justice Plan provides an overview of how the Leicestershire Youth Offending Service will link into partnership arrangements and deliver services in line with national requirements set out by the National YJB. The Plan outlines the YOS's governance arrangements and structure, the

proposed YOS reporting schedule to the YOSMB, resources, local performance, practice developments, priorities and future risks.

6. The 2020-23 Plan has been introduced in a slightly different format by incorporating some brief case studies in response to the request of the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting in April 2019 when it considered the previous plan, as well as feedback received from partner agencies through the YOSMB. Short case studies that showcase the work of the Youth Offending Service have been embedded within the draft Plan and can be found on pages 6 and 13.
7. The draft Plan highlights the continuing positive performance achieved by the YOS. The commitment to intervention with young people at the earliest opportunity is reflected in the performance of the YOS in relation to first time entrants into the criminal justice system compared to regional and national partners. The rate of young people receiving custodial sentences in Leicestershire is also low compared to regional and national partners.
8. In terms of outcomes the most significant area of challenge concerns the percentage of young people in employment, education, or training at the end of their period of work with the YOS, and the Plan focuses on the YOS working together with the school inclusion team and partner agencies to make improvements. The Plan also highlights the need for the YOS to focus on further developing how the voice of the child influences support, particularly in relation to those young people with the most complex issues.
9. Section E of the Plan focuses on future risks. The most significant current risk is linked to the increased understanding and influence of child criminal exploitation. The Plan highlights a number of priority areas of work linked to the response to this risk (see page 13 of the draft Plan).

Consultations

10. There is a requirement for the Plan to be approved by the statutory partners that make up the Youth Offending Service (YOS) partnership. The draft Plan has therefore been submitted to the YOSMB's quarterly meeting on 6th March 2020 with a request for feedback by 27th March 2020.

Resource implications

11. Section C of the draft Plan (page 7) sets out the resourcing and funding arrangements for the Youth Offending Service. In terms of the 2020-21 budget the YJB are yet to confirm the annual grant and no communications have been received to date. Confirmation is also yet to be received regarding all partner contributions. Overall the budget is likely to have a slight decrease on the 2019-20 budget.

12. The review of Early Help Services in 2018/19 led to the integration of a number of services into an integrated locality based Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS). The YOS and Youth Teams now form part of locality based teams within this Service. Whilst at that time there was an overall 12% reduction in budget for this service area as a whole, there were no reductions in the YOS budget or staffing numbers.
13. The early help transformation has led to YOS prevention staff working more closely with youth and family workers enabling a whole family approach to explore a young person's problems. During the last year there has been a small increase in resources with the inception of 3 additional workers to the 2 existing posts, which focus on providing consistent and intensive support to the most complex children through project responsive (page 12). There has also been a joint project with health and the City Council's YOS which has introduced a Clinical Psychologist and Forensic Psychologist who offer direct work with children with ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) and provide advice to YOS practitioners (page 12 of the draft Plan).

Timetable for Decisions

14. The draft Plan will be considered by the Cabinet in April or May, prior to submission to the YJB. The Cabinet will be asked to recommend to the full Council that it approve the Youth Justice Plan prior to the July deadline.

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Right Implications

15. Inequality is inherent within the criminal justice system. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been completed and is attached as Appendix B to this report.

Environmental Implications

16. There are no environmental implications arising out of the draft Plan.

Background Papers

Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Officers to Contact

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-23

Appendix B: EIA screening